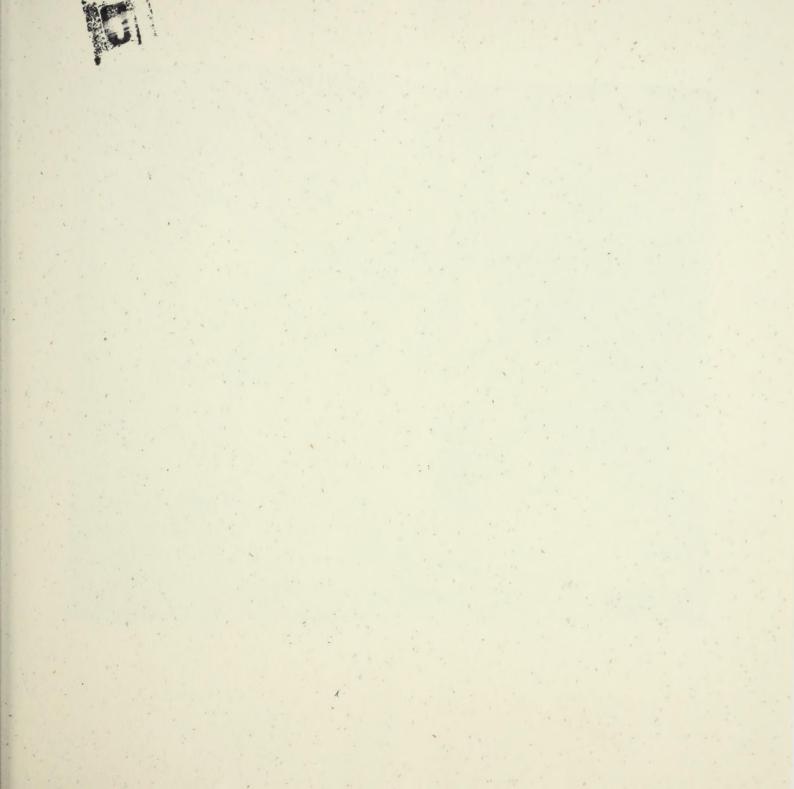


A child wakes up, puts up an easel, picks up a brush and paints—paints a perch, a tree, the warmth of the sun and the sound of the summer breeze—and a bird comes to the child and sings.

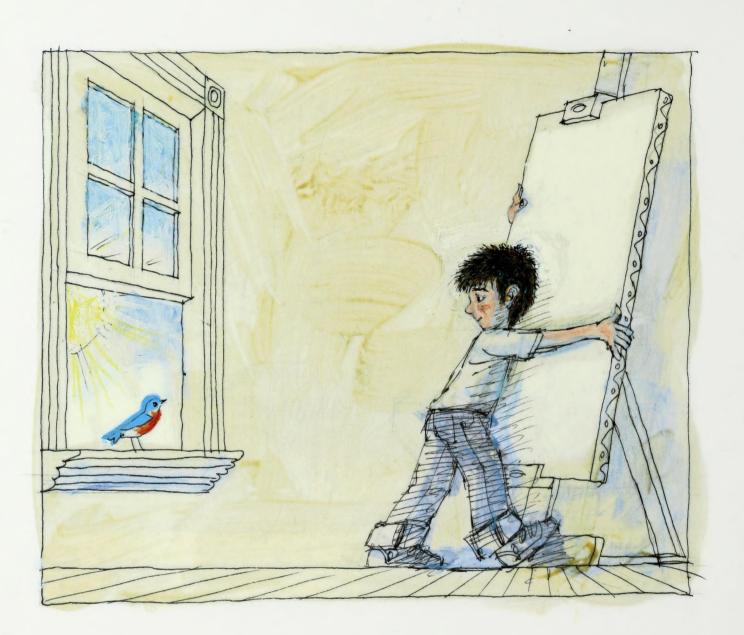
Jacques Prévert's celebrated poem is given a magical new setting in this picture book by Caldecott Medalist Mordicai Gerstein. It's both his most personal and most universal book to date: a meditation on art, creativity, and wonder that has meaning for every reader.











Jacques Prévert

How to Paint the Portrait of a Bird

Illustrations and Translation by Mordicai Gerstein



Roaring Brook Press New York



First paint a cage



with an open door.



Then, in the cage, paint something for the bird,



something useful and beautiful, but simple.



Then take the picture to a garden



... or a park





... or a forest.



Put the picture under a tree. Hide behind the tree.



Don't speak.
Don't move.





Sometimes the bird comes quickly. But it can just as well take years before deciding.





If the bird doesn't come right away, don't be discouraged. Wait.



Wait years if necessary.



It doesn't mean that your picture won't be good.



When the bird comes, if it comes,



remain absolutely silent.



Wait till the bird enters the cage.



Then gently close the door with your brush.



Then,



erase the cage, one bar at a time, being very careful of the bird's feathers.



Now paint the portrait of the tree



with the prettiest branch for the bird.



Paint the green leaves and the summer breeze.



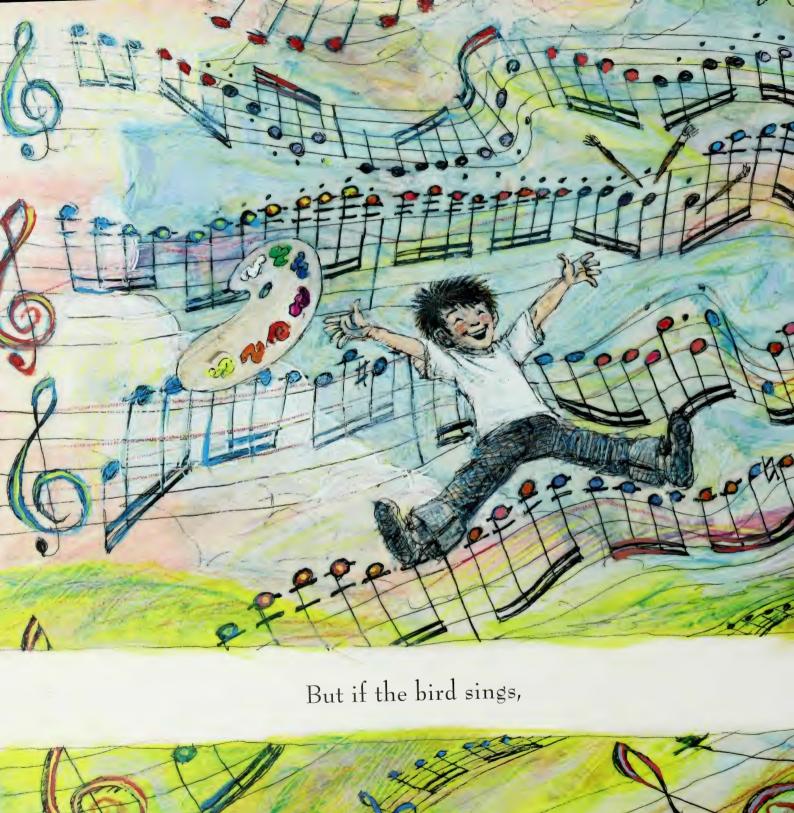
Paint the smell of the sunshine and the flowers, and the songs of the bees and the butterflies.

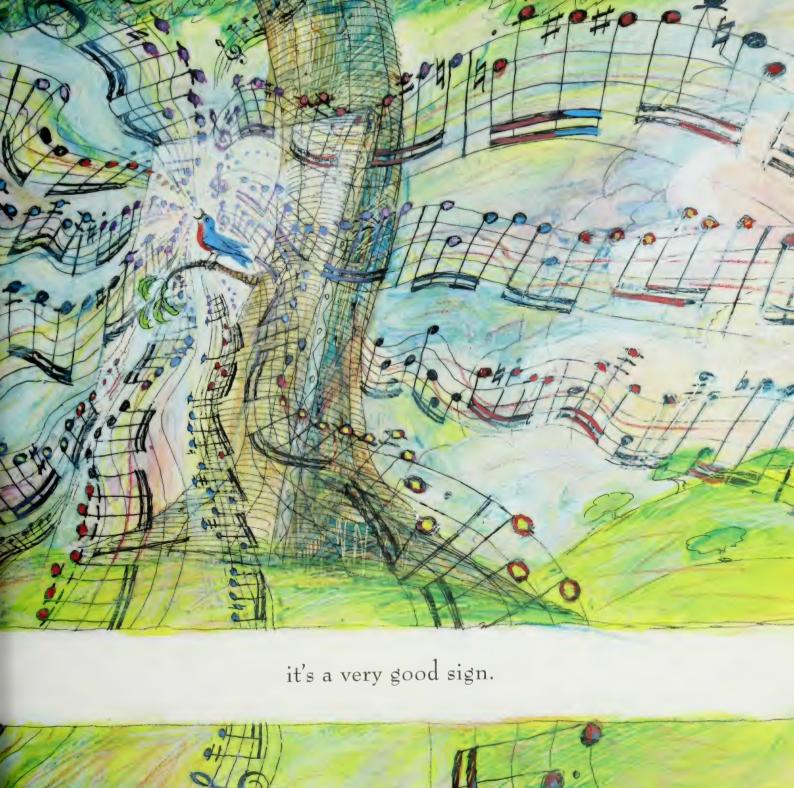


Then wait for the bird to sing.



If it doesn't sing, don't be sad. You did your best.







It's a sign that you can sign. So then, very gently, take a feather from the bird and write your name in a corner of the picture.









(Tomorrow you can paint another one.)

For Aram, Marina, Daisy and Hugh with all my love.

—M.G.

"Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau" by Jacques Prévert © Editions GALLIMARD, Paris, 1949.

Translation and illustrations copyright © 2007 by Mordicai Gerstein.

Published by Roaring Brook Press

Roaring Brook Press is a division of Holtzbrinck Publishing Holdings Limited Partnership

175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010

www.roaringbrookpress.com

All rights reserved

Distributed in Canada by H. B. Fenn and Company Ltd.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Prévert, Jacques, 1900-1977.

[Pour faire le portrait d'un oiseau. English]
To paint the portrait of a bird / by Jacques Prévert; translated and illustrated by Mordicai Gerstein.

ISBN-13: 978-1-59643-215-4 ISBN-10: 1-59643-215-2 1. Children's poetry, French. I. Gerstein, Mordicai, ill. II. Title. PQ2631.R387P68 2007 841'.914--dc22 2006032183

Roaring Brook Press books are available for special promotions and premiums For details contact: Director of Special Markets, Holtzbrinck Publishers.

> First Edition September 2007 Book design by Filomena Tuosto Printed in the United States of America 1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2



06/08

Lower Mills Branch Library 27 Richmond Street Dorchester, MA 02124-5610

Mordicai Gerstein's recent books include the 2004 Caldecott Medal winner, The Man Who Walked Between the Towers; The Old Country, a New York Times Notable Book; Carolinda Clatter, a Booklist Editors' Choice; and The White Ram, a Sidney Taylor Book Award Honor Book.

Mr. Gerstein lives in western Massachusetts with his wife, Susan Yard Harris.

Jacques Prévert was a poet and screenwriter whose poems—often chronicling life in Paris after the Second World War—are widely taught in French schools and have been sung by popular French vocalists as well as the American singer, Joan Baez. He wrote the screenplays for a number of important postwar French films, notably Les enfants du paradis (The Children of Paradise, 1945).

Jacques Prévert died in 1977.

Jacket illustration copyright © 2007 by Mordicai Gerstein Jacket printed in the United States of America



Roaring Brook Press New York

